

# *ANIL'S GHOST*

MICHAEL ONDAATJE

## TEXT SUMMARY & ACTIVITIES

This presentation based on the unit prepared by Pauline  
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Source: csu-hsc online

Other sources are acknowledged where possible



## Overview

- You need to consider why crime fiction might arise at particular times and the social, political, economic and cultural conditions that are conducive to its endurance and recurrence in popularity. The reasons for and validity of generic distinctions also need to be considered.
- As a genre, crime fiction's key focus is mystery but via this mystery other focuses might be explored. This mystery might be solved by 'rationality' and the 'careful accretion of evidence', which ensures the responder's active involvement in the deduction of the solution to the crime.
- Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost* set in Sri Lanka contrasts sharply with the other texts set in England and the US respectively. The crime of Sailor's murder is investigated in the context of mystery not only in terms of the crime but also in the lives of the protagonists. Accretion of evidence occurs with the inclusion of red herrings but science (through the work of a forensic anthropologist) works to solve the crime. The ending remains unresolved, as Anil's investigation results are not known.
- Adapted from HSC Classmate 2005, Daily Telegraph, Karen McEwen

## The Writer

- Michael Ondaatje was born in Sri Lanka in 1943, but moved to Britain when he was 11. As a young man he migrated to Canada, where he lives in Toronto. He made his literary name as a poet, and has published 11 books of poetry. More recently he has become widely known for his novels, plays, films and critical writing.
- His fiction includes the acclaimed *Coming Through Slaughter* (1976), *In the Skin of a Lion* (1987) and *The English Patient* (1992). The latter was the source for a highly successful film. He has written a memoir of his growing up in Sri Lanka (then known as Ceylon), *Running in the Family* (1982).
- Each of Ondaatje's fictions rests on a foundation of careful research into the history and milieu of his subjects. He is reported to have spent seven years on the research underpinning *Anil's Ghost*.
- As a writer, he is known for his poetic, allusive style, and for his fluid, almost cinematic, narrative structures, which move from scene to scene, between past and present, and from one character to another. This challenges the reader but ultimately builds a coherent and revealing mosaic of actions, events and viewpoints which is highly effective, and has been warmly praised by critics.

## Context

Sri Lanka, off the southern coast of India, is the island of legendary beauty which was once known as Serendip, giving its name to the word serendipity, (*to make a pleasant and unexpected discovery by accident*). Its history and geography form the background to *Anil's Ghost*, ironically a novel of unpleasant and not unexpected discoveries.

Ondaatje's other novels are set in the United States, wartime Italy and early 20th century Toronto. In *Anil's Ghost* he returns to the country of his family's origins and of his own childhood memories. Through using Anil, his central character, he is able to offer readers a memorable re-creation of what he now sees and what he remembers. Anil is depicted as an expatriate who has worked in places far from her homeland, including Guatemala, London and Arizona; she speaks for Ondaatje in many sections of the novel.

In the course of their investigations, the characters travel a great deal and regularly stay in shady guest houses designed to combat the heat. To help visualise these settings, it is a useful strategy to check the place names and the varied geography they represent. Most good atlases and many travel agents offer maps of suitable detail.

Tourist brochures remark on Sri Lanka's "amazing beauty and diversity", and Ondaatje immerses his readers in a wide range of landscape forms. Among the areas he describes are Colombo, the capital; the south coast area near Hambantota where the monk Narada (Palipana's brother) was eventually murdered; the legendary rock fortress of Sigiriya with its famous frescoes of the "Heavenly Maidens"; the highland areas of Bandarawela and Ratnapura; and the famous buddhas of Polonnaruwa. Sarath's brother, Gamini, has worked in the North Central Province dealing with victims of the civil war.

## Turbulent recent history

- ▶ Historical and cultural contexts are even more important in the novel. Sri Lanka was involved in the 1980s and early 1990s in a three-cornered contest, with the government forces attacked by and in turn attacking both the Tamil Tigers in the north, fighting for a separate state, and anti-government insurgents in the south. One result Ondaatje perceives is a secretive and repressive government, suspected of using illegal methods of suppression. Anil Tissera, the forensic archaeologist, has been sent by the U.N. on a Human Rights investigation [see the **Author's Note**, printed on the page after the main title page].
- ▶ Although the novel is set against a background of this political turmoil, which indeed produces the fear and tension to which the characters must react, Ondaatje has claimed it is not a book about politics, nor one attempting to suggest a solution to Sri Lanka's problems.
- ▶ In one reading, the novel works as an eloquent elegy for the dead of a country suffering from years of internecine war, and for the lost peace of mind of the ordinary people. They are forced into an uneasy silence, their voices lost in a haze of uncertainty and lack of trust over what is or is not true. Through the artificer Ananda, Ondaatje gives them too a voice. 'Sailor', the anonymous victim, is "a representative of all those lost voices" and therefore "to give him a name would name all the rest" (p 56).
- ▶ While working to uncover the human rights crimes it is her mission to reveal, Anil also comes to realise the reality of life lived in fear:
- ▶ *"...in the midst of such events, she realized, there could never be any logic to the human violence without the distance of time. For now it would be reported, filed in Geneva, but no one could ever give meaning to it. She used to believe that meaning allowed a person a door to escape grief and fear. But she saw that those who were slammed and stained by violence lost the power of language and logic" (p 55).*
- ▶ Through Anil's association with the archaeologist, Sarath, and his mentor, the epigraphist Palipana, Ondaatje is also able to incorporate seamlessly into the narrative an appreciation of the cultural heritage of Sri Lanka. The fragility of such heritage is made clear, as well as its power to move and its aesthetic qualities. It is shown as easily damaged in a context of civil lawlessness and violence.
- ▶ From the characters' direct comments or through their stream of consciousness Ondaatje is able to express a range of value judgments in relation to this context, which is perceived differently by each of the major characters. For more on this aspect of context, go to [Searching for truth](#).

## Activities

- ▶ 1. Research the influence of Buddhism on Sinhalese culture. In class or in small groups, discuss the following statement:

Location is traditionally of vital importance in the classic crime novel. How does the presentation of location in *Anil's Ghost* help create a memorable experience for the reader?

- ▶ 2. How do the experiences of any two of the minor characters in the novel, such as Sirissa, Linus Corea, Gunesena or Lakma, contribute to building the social context of the novel?

## *Anil's Ghost* as Crime Fiction

*Anil's Ghost* is a novel of mixed genre. Like a number of literary novels it uses most of the conventions of crime fiction to drive a complex narrative. To the basic elements of the crime fiction genre it adds a number of other important elements:

- a profound meditation on the nature of truth and varying perceptions of it
- an expatriate's portrait of the physical geography and cultural heritage of Sri Lanka
- a fictionalised account of some of the most violent episodes in contemporary history
- a sensitive, detailed, presentation of four intertwined characters caught up in tragic events
- a celebration of types of work that demand painstaking dedication and craftsmanship
- a revelation of certain values through events and varying human reactions to them.

In the terms of the *English Stage 6 Prescriptions* (p 27) *Anil's Ghost* is therefore a novel in which 'the mystery may also be the vehicle for other focuses.' The novel clearly moves beyond conventional crime fiction, not merely because of the poetic texture of the writing. It offers an eloquent elegy for the dead of a country suffering from decades of civil war. It shows that the appalling consequences of this war include an absence of trust and a haze of uncertainty over what is or is not true.

## Crime fiction elements

Many features of the novel allow readers to place it within the crime fiction genre:

- It is fictional, (although with a well-researched basis in recent history).
- It focuses on the elucidation of a particular crime, chosen to typify many thousands of others.
- It deals with serial crimes: in this case, the frequent, often random, killings carried out by modern guerillas, undercover government agents and terrorists, the stuff of daily headlines in the 20th and 21st centuries.
- It criticises the corrupt and self-serving actions of governments which oppose the guerillas, often using equally unlawful methods.
- Its heroine belongs to a profession whose work is currently fashionable in American crime fiction. [A top name in contemporary crime fiction is Kathy Reichs, one of only about fifty forensic anthropologists certified by the American Board of Forensic Anthropology, and author of the very successful *Deja Dead* (Arrow 1998), *Death du Jour* (Heinemann, 1999) and *Bare Bones* (2003)]

## Crime fiction elements

- Its locale is detailed, believable, and bound up with the particular nature of the crime
- Its sleuths, the forensic anthropologist Anil Tissera and the archaeologist Sarath Diyasena, operate in an atmosphere of fear and personal danger, but are not deterred from working to uncover the identity of both victim and perpetrators.
- Corrupt authorities who shelter or control the perpetrators provide a further obstacle.

*Anil's Ghost* clearly fulfils the syllabus prescription for the Crime Fiction elective:

**The genre of crime fiction has mystery as its key element. The mystery and its solution by rationality and the careful accretion of evidence may be the primary focus of the text. This invites the responders' active involvement in the deduction of the solution to the crime.**

*English Stage 6 Prescriptions [p 27]*

## Activity

- 1. Using the points from the previous slides, work in pairs to compile a list of examples from the text to support the ideas.
- Ensure that page references are provided, quotes where applicable.

## Ondaatje's narrative techniques

- Ondaatje's narrative method in *Anil's Ghost* as in his previous novels is summed up in his favourite quotation from the writer and critical theorist John Berger:  
***"Never again will a single story be told as though it were the only one."***

In an interview with Mick Brown (*The Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 June, 2000) he explains:

"I just don't think you can have one narrator, one sure narrative voice. The novel where the author is a guide doesn't interest me. Well, in a way I'm a guide, but allowing different voices to speak.

Instead, he says he wanted to break down that 'us, them, good guys, bad guys' kind of thing, and take four or five characters and examine how they live in that world. He also explains his books as being predicated on the avoidance of plot."

Mick Brown sums up this narrative method:

- "there is something hieroglyphic about his writing, assembled as it is from layers of voices, fragments of memory and shifting frames of time and action, which create more a sense of collage than of straightforward narrative. In *Anil's Ghost*, the emphasis shifts between Anil herself, Sarath the archaeologist, his brother Gamini, the doctor treating the casualties of war, and Ananda, the face painter of statues. Each has equal weight."

Ondaatje has worked as a filmmaker and loves film as a medium, but he has discounted the influence on his narrative structures of cinematic techniques, telling interviewer Sara Dowse (*The Sydney Morning Herald* 23-24 February, 2002) he did not consider himself to be more influenced by film than other writers. She however comments that:

- "...apart from the visual impact of his imagery, the fluidity of his narratives and the rapid juxtaposition of scenes are techniques associated with cinema."

# Ondaatje's narrative techniques

In the same interview Ondaatje acknowledges the influence of popular music on his writing, and his belief that every contemporary writer has been shaped by the rhythms and structures of 20th Century music:

"My novels are full of popular songs. The characters spend most of their time reading, singing and sleeping. Popular music has a huge subliminal influence on how we write now. It affects the rhythm of the prose."

Anil's moods and reactions are often suggested by lines from favourite songs that she recalls.

His narrative method in *Anil's Ghost* is marked not only by a great fluidity of time, place, and point of view, but also by variety of material. He uses intertextuality, interpolating some factual material, e.g. from an Amnesty International list of victims of the Sri Lankan political fighting (p 41); and from *The National Atlas of Sri Lanka* (in summary form, pp 39-40). These carry some of the factual background of the fiction.

Most of the interpolated material printed in italics, however, is flashback accounts of events in the previous lives of the characters, particularly Anil, but also more peripheral characters such as Ananda's murdered wife, Sirissa.

At other times, Anil's past life and that of other characters such as Gamini, Sarath and Palipana are revealed to the reader in the form of recollected memories, inspired by some happening in the novel's 'present', or in the form of conversations recalling the past. He uses also literary allusions, to add a resonance to the narrative by revealing the background of characters such as Palipana, Sarath and Anil. For the characters, remembered quotations form a type of bulwark against the threats and horrors of the present, an aid in making sense of the world.

Authenticity of description applies not only to the minute details of work, e.g. Ananda and the other mine workers (pp 91 ff). The landscape, the weather, and the daily customs of living are used to give the texture of Sri Lankan life. Ondaatje uses occasional Sinhalese words such as *bajaj*, *diya reddha* cloth, *pokuna*, *walawwa*. He uses also the device of cumulation, listing one piece of naming, evidence or information after another. An example is Sarath's reflection:

"The country existed in a rocking, self-burying motion. The disappearance of schoolboys, the death of lawyers by torture, the abduction of bodies from the Hokandara mass grave. Murders in the Muthurajawela marsh." (p 157)

## Responding to violence

Every writer of crime fiction has to decide how to present the violence which is usually at the heart of the mystery to be unravelled. Some revel in the physical details of violence and its effects on the human mind and body. Those who deal with serial killings have repeated chances to show the effects of homicide. Others, such as Ondaatje, choose to distance their narrative from the brutal immediacy, and show the crime's aftermath rather than the moment of committal.

*Anil's Ghost* is set in a country where three forces are using the weapons of terror against their perceived enemies and the helpless general population who are often their victims. Ondaatje shows awareness that he could have made more of the violence which backgrounds his story than he did. His main characters, because of their professional expertise, operate long after the crimes have been committed. To an extent this removes the story from overt accounts of violence. Even when Sirissa's death is narrated (pp 172-5) only the preceding time and her horrified realisation of what has happened at the school where she works is revealed in detail to the reader. Our imaginations supply the rest.

"Anil's Ghost could have been as brutal as the Sri Lankan terror really was, but it was written from a forensic point of view, it was more like a detective story, and was one step removed from the violence. I'm not a violent person but I write about what I fear, to shape it and mute it in a way....to re-create violence exactly as it happens can become pornographic."

[Ondaatje in an interview with Sara Dowse, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 23-24 February 2002]

## Forensic characterisation

Sleuthing--patiently digging for the facts in order to elucidate the mystery--is at the heart of the novel's plot.

But a parallel forensic investigation is going on: that of the readers as they excavate the personal lives of the four main characters. Anil and Sarath use their professional skills as forensic anthropologist and archaeologist to uncover the identity of 'Sailor', the recently reburied skeleton found amongst historic archaeological remains in a secure official heritage area. Readers must also use their skills as experienced readers to come to understand not only the characters, but also the way their personal experiences illuminate much of the essential background to the story. Ondaatje's narrative method is essentially an indirect one, requiring the reader's full attention to piece together the mosaic of information that accumulates about the characters as the plot unwinds.

The two other major characters, Gamini and Ananda, as well as the minor ones, seem positioned by Ondaatje to reveal some essential facets of Sri Lankan life, rather than to directly forward the solution of the mystery. Gamini's experiences show the human cost of war in casualties that overwhelm the hospitals and their exhausted staff. Ananda embodies all those village people who suffer but do not themselves want to become demons, those Ananda calls "spectres of retaliation." (p 304).

Through his characters the writer gives indirectly to the reader his observations on the events he has witnessed or researched.

## Activities

- . Work in small groups to document elements of Ondaatje's style, including those referred to above. Each person should find four or five examples of a particular element and explain to the group what they add to the effect of the narrative.
- . Cinematic narrative often works by cutting from one scene to another, juxtaposing them to imply a comment about the events and characters shown.
- . Find examples where one scene in the novel is followed by another, illuminating the meaning of both.

# Celebrating work

- The reality of daily work in the lives of his characters is a constant focus in Ondaatje's fiction. The minute details of the work performed by the four main characters: Anil, the forensic anthropologist, Sarath, the archaeologist, Gamini, the emergency hospital doctor, and Ananda, the artist and artificer, are described with care. For much of the sections of the novel dealing in turn with each of their lives, descriptions of their work dominate the narrative.
- To a large extent, the reader is positioned to share their preoccupation, working to achieve a clear understanding of what they do. The reward for the reader is the finding of clues to the mystery at the heart of the book: the crime committed against 'Sailor', the identity of the perpetrators, and the reasons for this and countless other crimes.
- In these sections of the narrative, the detailed preparation Ondaatje undertook becomes apparent. One character who appears as himself in the novel is the distinguished American forensic anthropologist, Clyde Snow, who is thanked in the credits. Ondaatje's references to human rights investigations in Guatemala, as recalled by Anil, are based on his own visits to that country to observe forensic anthropologists at work. Anil flies to Miami to meet her lover, Cullis on a break from such work "with the forensic team in Guatemala" (p 33). She is exhausted but so wholly absorbed in this work that even in sleep he noted "her hand moving constantly as if brushing earth away" (p 34).

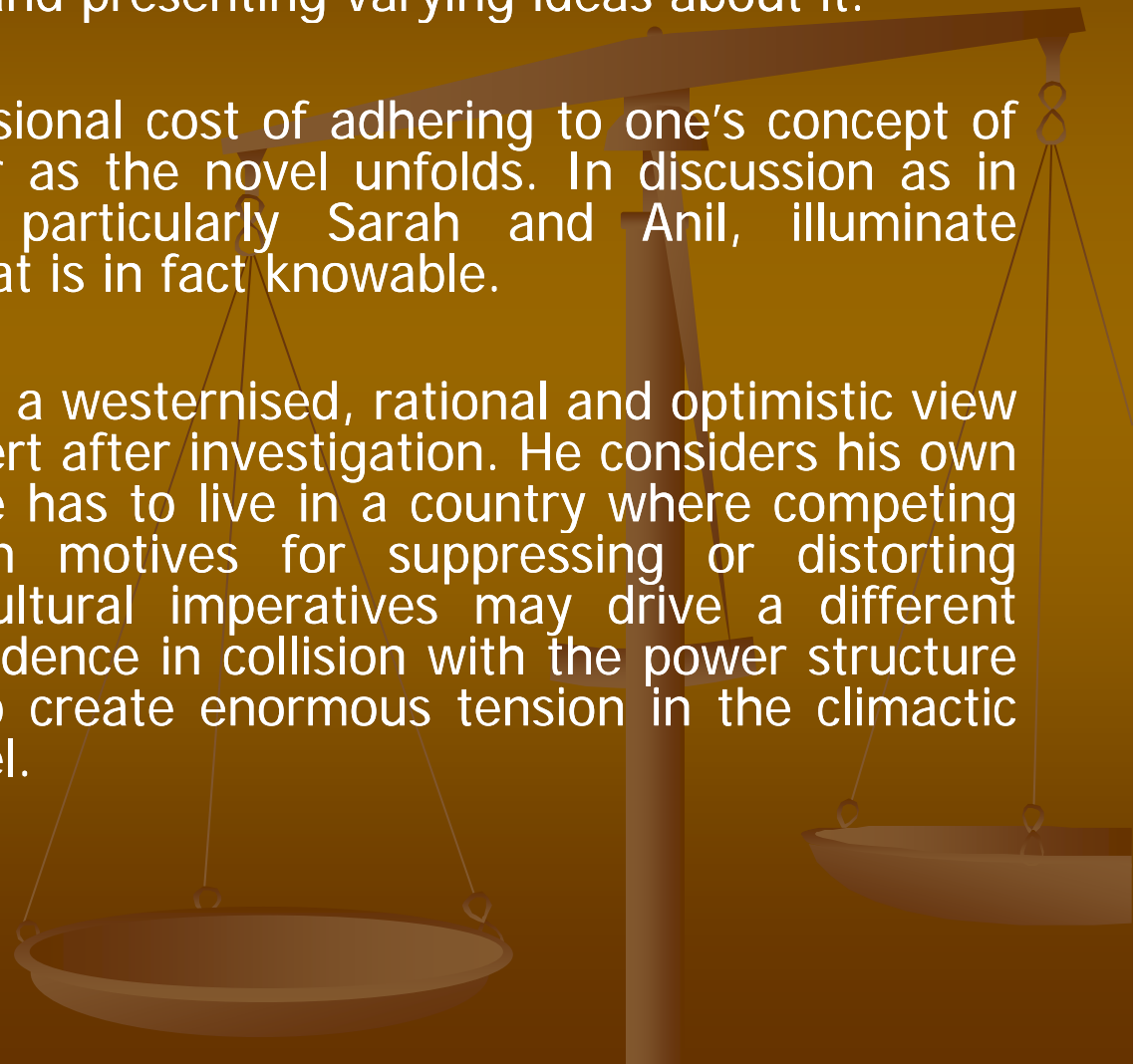
## Celebrating work

### ■ Clyde Snow

- The status of Clyde Snow as an eminent forensic anthropologist is clear from the list of 'skeletal confirmations' he is credited with. These include John F. Kennedy; the men who died in General Custer's 'last stand' in 1875; the famous Nazi war criminal, Dr. Josef Mengele, who had escaped to live in Brazil; the Egyptian boy king, Tutenkhamun; the victims of the Oklahoma bombing; and the victims found in mass graves at Vukovar, in the former Yugoslavia.
- Dr. Snow has worked to uncover forensic evidence for various human rights groups, in parallel with Anil's work, where one body must stand for thousands "to give him a name would name the rest." (p 56) He led the forensic work in Argentina which led to the conviction of five officers from the former government's infamous 'death squads'. A biographical note states: "Hundreds of officers were involved of course, but this is a start. More than anything, his work has brought these atrocities to the surface, where the bodies have to be dealt with and questioned by the public and governments."
- Many web sites have further information. The source quoted here is from [Clyde Snow](#)
- The brothers Gamini and Sarath, too, almost never leave the world of work. The exhausted doctor can sleep only within the ambience of the hospital, stretching out in the children's ward. They have colleagues and mentors, but seem now to be without close family or friends. Similarly, Anil breaks with Cullis, violently and suddenly, on a later visit to him in Borrego Springs (pp 100-101). She is still mentally absorbed in the forensic work from which she has taken a short break. She recalls this incident soon after she hears Paalipana describing the ritual of painting the eyes of the Buddha. "The artificer brings life sight and truth and presence", he tells her (p 99). This painstaking work foreshadows the work Ananda will do to reconstruct the face of Sailor's skull, and so help reveal his identity.
- Ananda in many ways represents the ordinary people of Sri Lanka, both in his suffering and in his working life. The arduous and dangerous manual work he and other gem miners do is detailed (pp 91-3). After the death of his wife the work, and drinking after it, wholly absorb him. His almost mythic task as the artificer who paints the eye of the statue is memorably detailed in the novel's finale (pp 304-7. This section typifies the way Ondaatje depicts the precise skills and rituals people develop to carry out their profession, craft or trade.

## Searching for truth

- The nature of truth, and how and to what extent it becomes knowable, is at the heart of the novel. Characters talk and think about the hidden nature of reality, returning again and again to the concept and developing and presenting varying ideas about it.
- The personal and professional cost of adhering to one's concept of truth also becomes clear as the novel unfolds. In discussion as in action the characters, particularly Sarah and Anil, illuminate opposing concepts of what is in fact knowable.
- In Sarath's view, Anil has a westernised, rational and optimistic view of what can be made overt after investigation. He considers his own view is more realistic--he has to live in a country where competing powers have their own motives for suppressing or distorting evidence, and where cultural imperatives may drive a different agenda. This clash of evidence in collision with the power structure is used by the author to create enormous tension in the climactic final chapters of the novel.



## Key Quotes

- Consider each of these comments on the nature of truth. By the end of the novel, which seems to be most validated?

a) 'Well, kings also caused trouble in those days,' he said. 'Even then there was nothing to believe in with certainty. They still didn't know what truth was. We have never had the truth. Not even with your work on bones.'

'We use the bone to search for it. "The truth shall set you free". I believe that.'

'Most of the time in our world, truth is just opinion.' (p 102)

b) Half the world, it felt, was being buried, the truth hidden by fear, while the past revealed itself in the light of a burning rhodendron bush.

Anil would not understand this old and accepted balance. Sarath knew that for her the journey was in getting to the truth. But what would the truth bring them into? It was a flame against a sleeping lake of petrol. Sarath had seen truth broken into suitable pieces and used by the foreign press alongside irrelevant photographs. (p 156)

c) 'You like to remain cloudy, don't you, Sarath, even to yourself.'

...'I don't think clarity is necessarily truth. It's simplicity, isn't it?'

'I need to know what you think. I need to break things apart to know where someone came from. That's also an acceptance of complexity. Secrets turn powerless in the open air.'

'Political secrets are not powerless, in any form', he said. (p 259)

## Review- "Ondaatje's Cathartic Vision"

by Andrea MacPherson

*Anil's Ghost* is a small, sudden glimpse into the soul of award-winning poet and novelist Michael Ondaatje. In the much anticipated follow-up to his Booker Prize and Governor General's Award-winning novel, *The English Patient*, Ondaatje explores both the extravagant beauty and the horrific civil war of his homeland, Sri Lanka. With swift prose, we are immediately immersed in his cathartic vision of an island's haunting history.

Anil Tissera is a forensic anthropologist returning to her native Sri Lanka to explore the current campaign of terror and murder brought about by a vast ethnic war near the end of the 20th century. She has been educated abroad and has not returned to Sri Lanka in a number of years. She returns to find the countryside torn apart by mass graves, night patrols and government interrogations. With the help of Sarath Diyasenaa, an archaeologist, Anil discovers bodies, skeletons and the beginnings of complex political mystery.

Anil and Sarath probe deeper into the mystery of the skeleton they have named Sailor, and find allies in forgotten members of Sri Lankan culture, such as Sarath's brother Gamini, the blind epigraphist Palipana and his young caretaker, and Ananda, a drunken widower with the abilities to paint death and restructure man. Ondaatje allows the reader to witness Sri Lanka through the dream-like perceptions of these characters.

*There are images carved into or painted on rock -- a perspective of a village seen from the height of a nearby hill, a single line depicting a woman's back bent over a child -- that have altered Sarath's perceptions of his world. Years ago he and Palipana entered unknown rock darkneses, lit a match and saw hints of colour. They went outside and cut branches off a rhododendron, and returned and set them on fire to illuminate the cave, smoke from the green wood acrid and filling the burning light.*

*These were discoveries made during the worst political times, alongside a thousand little dirty acts of race and politics, gang madness and financial gain. War having come this far like a poison into the bloodstream could not get out.*

*Those images in caves through the smoke and firelight. The night interrogations, the vans in daylight picking up citizens at random. That man he had seen taken away on a bicycle. Mass disappearances at Suriyakanda, reports of mass graves at Ankumbura, mass graves at Akmeemana. Half the world, it felt, was being buried, the truth hidden by fear, while the past revealed itself in the light of a burning rhododendron bush.*

## Review- "Ondaatje's Cathartic Vision"

by Andrea MacPherson

However, don't expect a novel like Ondaatje's previous work, *The English Patient*, *In the Skin of a Lion* and *Coming Through Slaughter*. With *Anil's Ghost*, Ondaatje has abandoned some of the dense, lush prose. While his trademark poetic language remains, more dialogue and straight away narrative are included through this latest novel. As *Anil's Ghost* is less concerned with the intricate, intimate lives of its characters and more inspired by the heavy political climate of his homeland, it is perhaps out of necessity that Ondaatje has chosen to use crisp, clean prose when dealing with a subject as complex as the civil uprisings in Sri Lanka.

There is a constant ebb and flow of characters directly involved with the civil war; these characters range from murder victims to doctors to anthropologists to forgotten artists. While they remain somewhat distanced from the reader, they do serve Ondaatje's purpose of examining the inhabitants of this tiny island. However, this tactic is not without fault. Some major plot lines and characters are dealt with too swiftly, in almost a summary manner as we race towards more political commentary. At times, the characters and their tenuous lives seem forgotten in the mass of plot and politics compiled within *Anil's Ghost*.

In *Anil's Ghost*, Ondaatje dissects the secret enemies, identity, memory, family and turbulent past of a lush country caught in the throes of murder, betrayal and warfare. He examines and unfolds the intricate layers that make up Sri Lanka and its tumultuous inhabitants. From the intensity and urgency of this novel it becomes apparent that the dark history of Sri Lanka touches Ondaatje close as bone, resulting in a book he was compelled to write. And while this personal purge seems as though it may have been essential for the author, it doesn't create quite the same journey for the reader. | May 2000

## Review- 'Painting the eyes of a god'

By Gary Kamiya

"Anil's Ghost," Ondaatje's fifth novel (fourth if you count "The Collected Works of Billy the Kid," which Ondaatje's own publishers seem uncertain how to classify, as a poem), is the most restrained and plot-driven of his books. This description is relative, of course: Even a subdued Ondaatje is more of a shape shifter and trickster than 99 percent of his peers. The polyphonic elements -- the use of multiple stories of equal or almost equal weight -- that are an Ondaatje trademark are still here, as are the majestic set passages, but for the first time in his career a single story forms the skeleton of the book.

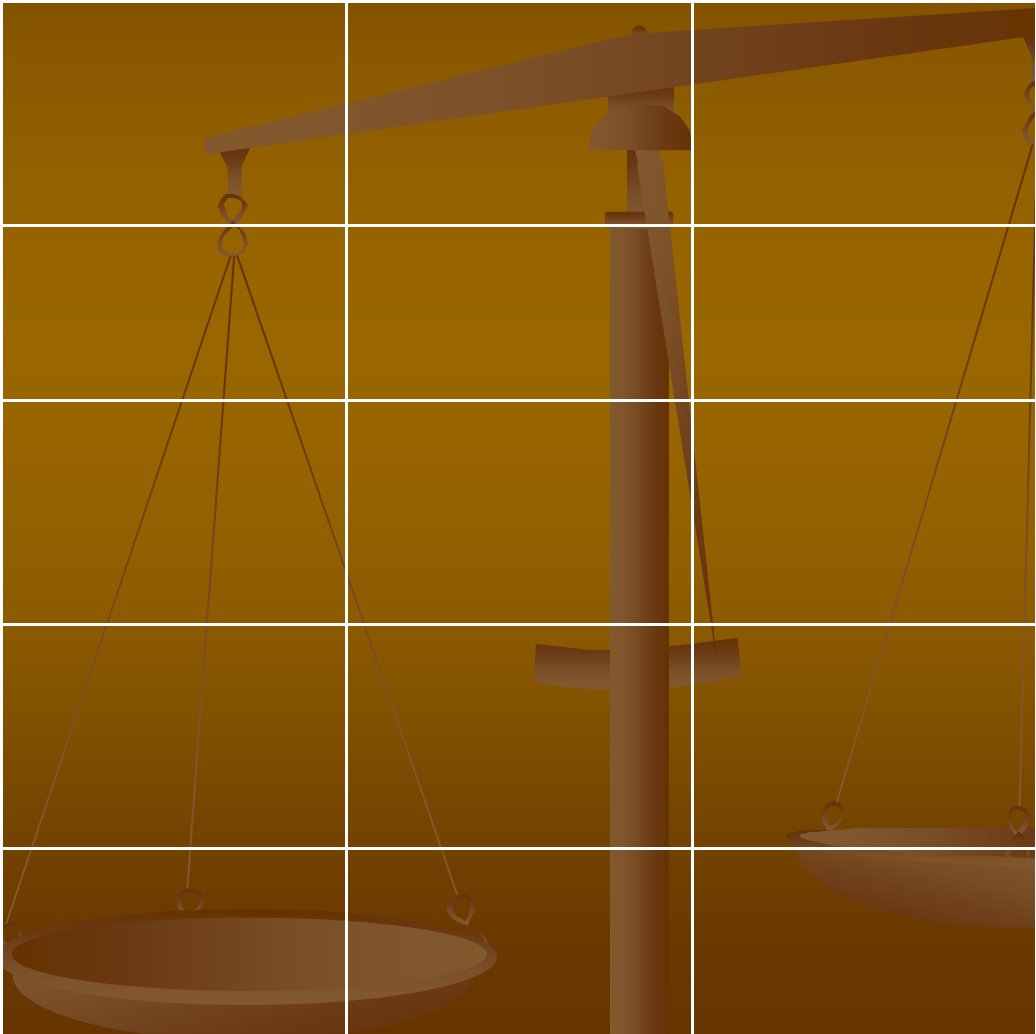
And that story unfolds in a much more conventional, suspense-driven form than the plots in Ondaatje's other works, which are loose and baggy monsters riddled by poetry and intoxicated by flashbacks, dreamlike tales that fade out more than end. In perhaps the most disconcerting development of all, "Anil's Ghost" even has a surprise ending.

The novel tells the story of Anil Tissera, a 33-year-old forensic anthropologist, who returns for the first time in 15 years to her native Sri Lanka after living in America. Anil, a veteran of the killing fields of Guatemala, Congo and other places -- her work consists of scientifically analyzing human remains to determine where and how death occurred -- has come back to do fieldwork and file a report for an international human rights group about the political violence that has ravaged the island for years.

The group's investigation is on a short leash, since the government, as well as insurgent groups, is known to be involved in the violence. Anil is assigned to work with an archaeologist named Sarath Diyasena, a man in his late 40s whose wife committed suicide some years before. In the course of their investigation, she discovers that a skeleton found in a government-controlled dig site is not hundreds of years old, like the others, but no more than six years old -- clearly the remains of someone killed by the government. Anil thinks, "Who was he? This representative of all those lost voices. To give him a name would name the rest."

## Characters

	Qualities to the sub-genre	Purpose in the text	Devices used to convey role	Evolution of C.F
The Big Sleep				
TRIH				
Anil's Ghost				
Related text				
Related text				



## Other Focuses

1. Reflect upon each text and then write a paragraph explaining how each can be seen to be exploring aspects of the world in which they are representing and composed in.
- You should be able to develop a series of ideas that illustrate some of the common elements of the texts studied and also indicate the contrasts that exist.

